

УДК 37.037

**FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFE****D. Paul Schafer**

*The article deals with the problem of Arts Education and its influence on person's entire life in view of spiritual and other benefits. The author discloses the significance of the individual approach to education and development of the child's personality by example of his family. Besides, the author documents the necessity of intensive education received in the arts and emphasizes its important role for the development of a personality.*

**Key words:** *Arts education, foundations for life, development of a personality, creativity, artistic sensibility, aesthetic sensitivity.*

The best thing my parents did for me when I was young was give me an education in the arts. I have been reaping the benefits of this all my life.

Awareness of this fact has not suddenly vaulted into my consciousness. It has always been there, progressively broadening and deepening over the years as I have come to understand my good fortune and appreciate how much this has helped me in life.

My parents were not well-to-do. Nor were they well-educated. They came from farming stock - my mother from Manitoba and my father from Saskatchewan – and were forced to leave school rather early to earn a living and help support their parents. However, my mother did manage to go to normal school and teach for a number of years before she got married, although my father was forced to leave school in grade ten, despite the fact that he had done very well in school up to that point in time.

Both my parents understood the value of an education in the arts, just as many parents do. It is not coincidental that the large majority of parents want music lessons, singing lessons, dance lessons, or art lessons for their children, even if they have been deprived of such opportunities themselves. They understand the value of the arts for happiness, fulfillment, and well-being in life.

My parents certainly did. I don't know where this came from, but it was definitely there. Perhaps it was because they came from European stock, and were able to benefit from the high value Europeans generally place on the arts. Perhaps

it was because they saw people around them whose children had benefited from an education in the arts and wanted their children to benefit from this as well. Or perhaps it was because they taught themselves to play musical instruments or paint pictures and wanted this for their children as well.

Interestingly, my mother taught herself to play both the piano and the violin, and played in a dance band and community orchestra for a number of years when she was young despite the fact that she didn't have any lessons on either instrument. My father taught himself to play the piano too – although not as well as my mother – and would often sit down at the piano after dinner and play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*, Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune* – or as Victor Borge called it '*Clear the Saloon*' – and the first few pages of Chopin's *Etude in E Major* before it got too difficult. He also taught himself to paint pictures, and produced many beautiful pastel and water colour paintings without the benefit of any lessons. He cultivated a keen interest in classical music later in life, although he had no opportunities to listen to classical music when he was young.

It is not surprising, then, that my parents wanted their children to have an excellent education in the arts – the kind of education that was deeper, richer, and broader than the one provided by elementary and secondary schools at the time and probably even today. They commenced their quest to achieve this by arranging for me and my brother Murray to have art classes at the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the Art Gallery of Ontario. These classes took place every Saturday morning when Murray was eleven or twelve and I was seven or eight. I recall taking classes from someone called A. Y. Jackson and another person called Arthur Lismer. What I didn't know at the time was that these two talented individuals were not just art teachers, but distinguished members of Canada's Group of Seven, undoubtedly the most famous group of artists Canada has ever produced.

I enjoyed the classes at the Art Gallery very much. I also enjoyed all the paintings displayed there, as well as the many different rooms in which they were displayed. Since authorities at the Gallery were anxious to emulate European masters, styles, galleries, and tastes, most of the paintings were by artists such as Gainsborough, Constable, Turner, Goya, Vermeer, Van Dyck, and others. I even recall a painting by Rembrandt, and one or two by French Impressionists. These paintings had a lasting effect on me, since they exposed me to some of the finest paintings and painters in the world, despite the fact that they were European in origin and there were few if any paintings by Canadian artists that I can remember.

Taking lessons at the Art Gallery of Toronto and seeing the many beautiful paintings on display there was not the only experience that had a lasting effect on me. I also remember being asked by a little old Jewish lady on Dundas Avenue to light her stove every Saturday morning on our way to the Gallery because she was not allowed to light her stove on the Sabbath. While this seems trivial or insignificant, it had a profound effect on me because it exposed me to a person who had very different religious beliefs and cultural convictions than I did. When I look back on it now, I can see that it was experiences like this that were instrumental in inculcating in me a strong desire to learn more about the many diverse cultures and religions of the world at a very early age.

It was about this time that my mother enrolled me in Grace Church on-the-Hill choir. *This was one of the most important – if not the most important – experiences in my life.* It filled me with an appreciation for music in general – and religious music in particular – that has grown steadily over the years and endured to the present day. Whenever I am bored or depressed, I usually end up realizing it is because I am not listening to enough music to keep my spirits high. Today, I enjoy music of all types, styles, genres, and parts of the world: popular and classical; sacred and secular; ancient, medieval, and modern; and African, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and North American. However, I am aware that it was my early encounter with ‘religious music’ that made all this possible.

One of the best things about Grace Church on-the-Hill was all the music there was in the service, which is true for most Anglican churches. Not only was much of the liturgy sung rather than spoken, but also there were many wonderful hymns and anthems. I enjoyed singing these hymns and anthems immensely, although I didn’t have a good singing voice. The organist and choir master at Grace Church – John Hodgins – said it was because the doctor cut too deep when he removed my tonsils. I don’t know how much truth there is in this, but my voice did become a good singing voice – momentarily – just before it changed. Unfortunately, it wasn’t long enough for John Hodgins to take advantage of it as far as any solos or separate parts were concerned. Nevertheless, I count the experience I had in the choir among the richest and most valuable I have had in life.

There were many other reasons for enjoying the choir. One was singing *The Messiah* every Christmas at Massey Hall in Toronto when I was young, although we were so far up in the second balcony that it was virtually impossible to see the conductor – Sir Ernest Macmillan – who was one of Canada’s most outstanding musicians and distinguished conductors at the time. Another was

singing at weddings at Bishop Strachan School across the street from Grace Church on-the-Hill. Like the services at the Church, this involved singing a great deal of beautiful music, and being paid handsomely for the privilege of doing so.

Yet another was going to choir camp every summer. The best thing about this – quite apart from getting out of Toronto and the heat of the city for two weeks in July or August – was being out in nature and enjoying everything nature had to offer. Since the camp was held in a different location each year, this provided an opportunity to get acquainted with a great deal of beautiful scenery in Muskoka and other areas north of Toronto, as well as to enjoy many pristine lakes and rivers, take long walks in the country and the forest, learn how to paddle a canoe and row a boat, and eat freshly-grilled fish for breakfast most mornings.

There were pranks too, as there are in all choirs. They occurred often, but not without devastating consequences in some cases. The best example of this was the time the Rector caught me playing a boogie base my brother had taught me on the chimes of the organ at Grace Church before choir practice one afternoon. I was so anxious to hear what a boogie base would sound like on the chimes that I failed to realize that the sound would reverberate throughout the Church and the entire neighbourhood around the Church, which was located in Forest Hill, one of Toronto's most fashionable and up-scale areas. Although I thought I was alone in the Church at the time, it turned out that the Rector – Dr. Dowker – was working in his office that day. As soon as he heard the chimes, he came flying across the chancel to put an instant stop to it. He came so fast, in fact, that he didn't even stop at the centre of the chancel to bow to the cross. It was the first and only time I ever saw him do this during the six or seven years I spent in the choir. Boy, did I get it that day! I got severely reprimanded by the organist and choir master, John Hodgins, following the tongue-lashing I received from Dr. Dowker.

While the experience I had in Grace Church on-the-Hill choir was one of the most memorable and valuable experiences in my life, listening to classical music with my father was another. We would lie on the couch in the living room together listening to classical music on the old '78's for what seems like hours on end. The records had to be changed frequently in those days, since each record played for only a couple of minutes before it had to be changed. Unfortunately, this was before the days of automation, when it was possible to stack many records on the record player and play them simultaneously without having to change them one by one.

My father loved the music of Brahms, Beethoven, Schubert, Rachmaninoff, and Chopin, and instilled this love in me. He was particularly fond of Schumann,

who he said had a remarkable capacity for creating musical problems for himself and then extricating himself from these problems with great beauty, imagination, and ingenuity.

There were piano lessons too, paid for in carefully-calculated monthly installments by my parents. Unfortunately, I couldn't play the piano any better than I sang. My piano teacher said it was because I had short fingers and a 'lazy left hand.' This irked me immensely because I was - and still am - left-handed, and one of the most outstanding pianists in the world at the time was Arthur Rubinstein, who had the shortest fingers I have ever seen. Nevertheless, I did manage to pass the Grade VIII piano exam and Grade II theory exam at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. However, the most memorable experience I had with the piano was being paid in peanuts to practice. This was recorded on a blackboard in the kitchen. One day I remember getting nine and a half peanuts for practicing four and three-quarters minutes. I was far more interested in playing ball hockey on the street.

These were not the only experiences I had in the arts that my parents arranged for me when I was young. My mother also read to Murray and myself for hours when we were young, much as many parents do for their children. Murray and I would lie spell-bound on the bunk beds my father had built for us listening to stories like *Alibaba and the Forty Thieves*, *Aladdin's Wonderful Lamp*, *Tales of the Arabian Nights*, *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor*, *Peter Pan*, *Tom Thumb*, *the Scarlet Pimpernel*, and many others. I think the name of the red-covered books these stories were in was *Journeys Through Bookland*. They were compiled by Charles H. Sylvester, and were part of a universal anthology that was put together especially for children with some of the finest literary masterpieces in the world in them.

These masterpieces ran the gamut of possibilities. There were short stories, long stories, epic tales, everyday adventures, poems, and virtually everything else. They were drawn from every conceivable part of the world – western, eastern, northern, and southern – and, like the experience with the little old Jewish lady, filled me with a keen desire to learn more about the diverse cultures, traditions, customs, and countries of the world. They also instilled in me an appreciation for great literature that has persisted to this day. It is difficult to see how a comprehensive education in the arts can be achieved without it.

My parents also saw to it that I was able to enjoy a number of theatrical performances when I was young. One of the most memorable of these was a performance by an aboriginal group on the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford,

Ontario one crisp, fall evening in September. I cannot remember the subject matter of the performance, but it had a profound effect on me. Perhaps it was about Hiawatha, the legendary chief of the Onondaga tribe who founded the Iroquois Confederacy and was immortalized in a famous poem by Henry Longfellow called *The Song of Hiawatha*. But much more likely it was about Joseph Brant, the brilliant Mohawk leader and political strategist who was friendly with the British and led the colonial Loyalists and Indian troops against the American troops during the great American Revolutionary War.

After the war, Brant relocated in Ontario and became a prominent advocate and tireless negotiator for the Six Nations Indians. He also built a farm and homestead on a large tract of land that had been given to him in the Burlington-Brantford area by John Graves Simcoe, Governor of Ontario. He became so well known, in fact, that the City of Brantford and Brant County are named after him. But what stands out most clearly in my mind was the incredible setting that was selected for the aforementioned performance. It took place on and around a lake well after dark. The site was lit with huge torches and candles, with the audience seated on the shore of the lake. It was a captivating experience, which kept me in a state of rapture and suspense for the entire production.

There is one final area that deserves mention because it is so fundamentally related to the education I received in the arts when I was young. It has to do with the home my parents created for us. Although this was not as specific or concrete as taking piano lessons, art lessons, singing in a choir, listening to classical music, being exposed to a great deal of wonderful literature, or seeing an enthralling theatrical production, it seemed to incorporate everything my parents knew about the arts rolled into one.

We have all been in enough family residences to know that there is a huge difference between a 'house' and a 'home.' A house has all the accoutrements and trappings that are required for life and living - tables, chairs, beds, sofas, lamps, pots, kettles, a stove, a refrigerator, a furnace, carpets, wall hangings, paintings, and the like. However, this doesn't make it a home. It only becomes a home when these things are arranged with consummate care, attractively displayed, cleverly presented, and a great deal of artistry and creativity goes into ensuring that they serve aesthetic functions and not just practical or commonplace functions.

This is seldom a matter of money. More often than not, it is a matter of taste. Many people who have a great deal of money to spend on family abode and household items are incapable of making a house a home. Conversely, many people who do not have a lot of money to spend are more than capable of doing

this. We have all experienced family dwellings where people have an enormous amount of money to spend on furnishing and decorations and end up creating a place that is cold, impersonal, and unattractive rather than warm, enjoyable, and inviting. And the more money they spend, often the worse things get!

Unfortunately, they lack the artistic sensibilities and aesthetic sensitivities that are required to make a house a home.

Not so my parents. They knew exactly how to make our house a home and had an incredible knack for this, which I believe was intimately tied up with their awareness of, and appreciation for, the arts. They seemed to know where everything fit, what went with what and what did not, and how to achieve the maximum effect. This was especially true for my mother. Although she had very little money to work with and had to be extremely careful with every penny, she knew exactly how to use pictures, wall-hangings, knick-knacks, craft objects, carpets, and so forth to warm a room, create intimacy and aesthetic appeal, make every room distinctive and unique, and blend all the various parts together to form a harmonious and integrated whole. As a result, we enjoyed living at 490 Rushton Road in Toronto immensely. Although the house was not in the best of neighbourhoods and was semi-detached, this didn't matter to us. It had an artistic appeal and aesthetic ambiance about it that was as cherished as it was rare. It made life and living for me, Murray, and my parents far more memorable and satisfying than it otherwise would have been.

While the education I received in the arts when I was young was provided primarily by my parents, it was supplemented at elementary and secondary school. There were the usual art and music classes - which were largely concerned with how to play a musical instrument and paint pictures - as well as a number of opportunities to engage in extramural activities, such as going to a community drama production, joining a photography club, or participating in the school play or annual music night. This was especially true at secondary school. Indeed, it was at secondary school that my musical horizons were broadened quite considerably. Although I had listened to a great deal of classical music and sung an enormous amount of religious music, I had not been exposed to much music of other kinds. This changed dramatically when I was in secondary school, and I have been grateful for this ever since.

It was at secondary school that I was exposed to musicals for the first time, which were extremely popular when I was growing up in the nineteen fifties and sixties. Most of these musicals were created by American composers and lyricists, such as Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II, Alan Jay Lerner, Frederick

Loewe, and others. Three of my favourites were *Carousel*, *Brigadoon*, and *Oklahoma*, which were performed at the secondary school I attended although I was not involved in any of the productions. But they filled me with a love for musicals in general - and American musicals in particular – that has grown steadily since that time, including *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *My Fair Lady*, *Porgy and Bess*, and somewhat later, *The Sound of Music* and *Camelot*. These musicals, and others, have many wonderful songs in them, such as *If I Loved You* and *You'll Never Walk Alone* from *Carousel* and *Some Enchanted Evening* from *South Pacific*. I wish these and other musicals were performed more often than they are now, since they are filled with many exquisite songs and melodies that linger on in the mind and memory for decades.

It was also at secondary school that I was exposed to a great deal of popular music for the first time, and developed a keen appreciation for it. As a result, I enjoy popular music today as well as classical music, and don't make much distinction between the two. If I like a piece of music and I think it is beautiful, I will listen to it regardless of what people think or whether it is popular or classical in nature.

Many popular songs were all the rage when I was in secondary school, including *Love is a Many Splendored Thing*, *Shangri-La*, *Unchained Melody*, *Band of Gold*, *Mr. Sandman*, *My Prayer*, *Sh-Boom*, *I Believe*, *Take My Hand I'm a Stranger in Paradise*, and *Three Coins in the Fountain*. Numerous singers and groups were also popular, such as Debbie Reynolds, Rosemary Clooney, Patti Page, Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Frankie Lane, the McGuire Sisters, The Four Lads, The Four Coins, the Platters, and others. I enjoy listening to these singers and groups whenever I hear them – which regrettably is far too seldom – as well as the music of many other singers who were popular at the time.

I am sure this is true for all young people and all musical eras, be it the nineteen fifties and sixties, the seventies and eighties, the nineties, and the new millennium. Every era produces its own pop stars who are favourites, such as Elvis Priestley, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Bee Gees, Abba, Ella Fitzgerald, Bob Dylan, Ray Charles, Barbara Streisand, Madonna, Céline Dion, Beyoncé Knowles, Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, and countless others who have been popular over the last half century or are popular today. This may have something to do with the fact that many people have romantic attractions and love affairs when they are young – romantic attractions and love affairs that often last a lifetime – and are usually tied up with music or the arts in some way. I am always



amazed at how many people end up marrying their childhood or high school sweethearts and spending the rest of their lives together.

Although there were many other opportunities to enjoy the arts when I was in secondary school, most of the students did not have the intensive education in the arts that I did when I was young, due to the strong commitment that was made to this by my parents. And I was aware of something else. I was aware of how much friction there was between the arts and sports when I was in school.

This is best demonstrated by the experience I had with the French horn in secondary school. When I was in Grade XI, I decided to take music as an option. I was told that I would have to learn to play a musical instrument as a fundamental prerequisite of this option. So I decided to take the French horn because it had a mellow tone and sounded nice. I was also involved in a number of sports at the time, especially football and basketball. Whenever I had to take the French horn home to practice, I would leave school early on those days because I didn't want my teammates on the football or basketball team to see me carrying an awkward-looking French horn case home from school for fear of being ridiculed and teased too much. So I would slink along side streets and over backyard fences with this cumbersome-looking French horn case under my arm, always being eternally grateful it wasn't a tuba or a double bass. You can imagine how embarrassing it would have been for me to be seen carrying a French horn, tuba, or double bass home from school when I was the quarterback of the football team and we were well on our way to winning a T.D.I.A.A. - Toronto District Intercollegiate Athletic Association - football championship.

This friction between the arts and sports was palpable when I was in secondary school. And it wasn't confined to athletes. It affected every boy and girl at the school because sports were generally deemed to be 'male activities' whereas the arts were generally deemed to be 'female activities.' But the consequences were the same. It kept boys out of the arts, and girls out of sports. I have often wondered if things have changed significantly in this respect now that girls are much more involved in sports than they were in those days. My impression is that things haven't changed all that much, although I have no factual evidence or empirical documentation to back this up.

When I went to university, my education in the arts was curtailed somewhat, although I continued to enjoy listening to music and visiting art galleries and museums whenever I had the opportunity to do so. Nevertheless, I didn't take any formal classes in the arts because I was enrolled in a very heavy commerce and finance and then economics program and there was simply no

provision for courses in the arts. As a result, I had to settle for enjoying the arts in my spare moments and leisure time, although they were never far from my mind. However, I did have one experience in the arts at university that had a profound effect on me. Like many other experiences, it was in the field of music. It did a great deal to expand my musical horizons even more, largely by exposing me to an area of music that was not well known to me at the time but has been an integral part of my life ever since.

It happened one day when I was walking past Hart House at the University of Toronto. Suddenly I heard some exquisite music lofting out of one of the windows at Hart House. I stood there for the longest time listening to this music because it was so incredibly beautiful and I had never heard it before. When it was over, I went to the music room at Hart House to find out what it was and who composed it. It turned out to be *The Four Seasons* by Antonio Vivaldi, one of the world's greatest composers of baroque music. While I had been exposed to a great deal of baroque music through composers like Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel during my years in the choir, I had not been exposed to much baroque music by other composers and certainly nothing by Vivaldi that I can remember.

Hearing *The Four Seasons* opened up a whole new musical world for me. It instilled in me an avid desire to learn more about the music of Vivaldi – the so-called 'Red Priest' – as well as other baroque composers such as Arcangelo Corelli, Alessandro Scarlatti, and Tomaso Albinoni from Italy, François Couperin and Jean Philippe Rameau from France, Henry Purcell and John Stanley from England, Georg Philipp Telemann from Germany, Domenico Scarlatti from Italy and Spain – and the son of Alessandro Scarlatti – and Dietrich Buxtehude from Denmark. This turned out to be a real 'find' for me, as baroque music has played a prominent role in my life ever since. I love the music of baroque composers. It is so uplifting, majestic, and accessible that it never fails to move me and fill me with a great deal of joy and inspiration whenever and wherever I hear it. This is confirmed by many other people. In fact, contemporary research is revealing that baroque music has a very favourable and exhilarating effect on people because it is very regal and evocative and affects that part of the brain that produces positive feelings, emotions, and sensations.

Looking back on the many different experiences I had in the arts in my youth – both inside and outside the formal educational system – makes me realize how fortunate I was to be exposed to the arts when I was young, as all people are even if they have not had the good fortune to experience the rich and varied

education in the arts that I did. There is only one thing I would change if it was possible to do so. I would see to it that every person was given a solid education in the architectural, cinemagraphic, culinary, and horticultural arts, as well as in the material arts or crafts. For although I had a comprehensive education in the visual, musical, and literary arts, and was exposed to a fair amount of drama, I didn't have any education in these other areas. It was only later in life that I realized what I had missed. Unfortunately, I had to wait until I was well into my thirties and had travelled a great deal before realizing how important the architectural, cinemagraphic, culinary, horticultural and material arts are for life and living.

All this raises a very interesting question. What is it about the arts in general – and arts education in particular – that make it so imperative for every person in the world to have a comprehensive education in the arts? Since there are many reasons, it pays to examine these reasons in depth because the arts and especially arts education provide an incredible *foundation for life*.

First of all, the arts and arts education bring an enormous amount of fulfillment and happiness in life, not only when people are young but in all stages of life. The joy and satisfaction that comes from music, paintings, plays, literature, dance, and the like is immense, especially if we open our hearts, minds, souls, spirits, senses, and intellects to them and allow them to penetrate into the interior of our beings. Exposure to the arts during our youth is an investment that yields myriad benefits throughout life. There is simply no substitute for it.

This doesn't always require a great deal of money. In fact, while attending professional concerts and plays and taking private singing, dance, and music lessons can be expensive, there are usually ample opportunities to enjoy the arts in all communities and countries that are not too expensive if we search them out and hunt for them. The satisfaction that derives from this over the course of a lifetime is incalculable, which is evident on the faces of young people, children, adults, and seniors whenever we encounter them enjoying a concert, a play, a painting, a piece of music, a dance, or some other captivating artistic work.

Fortunately, this is much easier to achieve today than it was in the past, due largely to developments in modern technology. There is hardly a person in any part of the world who is not able to access the arts through radio, television, film, computers, iphones, ipods, Black Berries, the Internet, You Tube, Facebook, Twitter, tablets, or some other technological device owned by family, friends, schools, local groups, or people in the community. The ability to gain access to works of art of the highest calibre by virtually every artist and arts organization in

the world – past and present, ancient and modern, Asian, African, Latin American, Caribbean, North American and Middle Eastern – is an achievement of monumental proportions, as people everywhere in the world are discovering to their pleasure and delight.

This is enhanced many times over when people get involved in the arts in a participatory way. The ability to play a musical instrument, sing in a choir, paint a picture, perform in a theatrical production, or make a craft object can bring an immense amount of pleasure and satisfaction in life. To actually be able to sit down and play a piece of music on the piano, draw a picture of birds, animals, landscapes, or people, dance in the street, participate in making a film or television program, take photographs, or fashion gifts from small bits of paper, cloth, wood, or other materials is an asset of major proportions. There is simply no substitute for this or time limit on it. It can be done at any time in one's life, as elderly people are discovering in seniors' homes and retirement centres in virtually all parts of the world today.

The arts also provide excellent vehicles for developing our communication skills and abilities. They make it possible for us to speak more clearly, write more concisely, and express our thoughts and ideas more cogently and convincingly. While I have never taken a drama course, my neighbour next door tells me that the drama course her daughter took in high school was *the most important class she ever took in school*. It helped her come out of her shell, perform effectively in groups, communicate more easily with the public, and develop a strong sense of identity, confidence, belonging, and self-worth.

This is enriched by the fact that the arts are excellent vehicles for expressing our emotions and feelings. It is impossible to participate in any artistic endeavour without learning to express one's feelings and emotions in sensitive, moving, and caring ways, as well as connect with people on a deeper, richer, and more profound and compassionate level. While the arts can be provocative at times – and must be if they are to perform one of their most essential functions in society – the feelings and emotions that are evoked through the arts are usually far more positive than negative. They seldom injure people, destroy things, or produce irrational or violent forms of behaviour.

One of the most interesting things about the arts is the fact that different instruments, plays, paintings, colours, and so forth can evoke different feelings and emotions. There is a significant difference, for example, between the feelings and emotions that are evoked by an oboe or a saxophone – which are often soothing, haunting, and melancholy in nature – and the feelings and emotions that

are evoked by a cello or a trumpet, which tend to be more assertive and strident in nature. All that is required to confirm this is to listen to an oboe concerto by Tomaso Albinoni, a musical composition played by saxophonists like Charlie 'Bird' Parker, John Coltrane, or Stan Getz, a cello work performed by Yo-Yo Ma, or a trumpet voluntary played by Wynton Marsalis. And what is true for musical instruments is equally true for paintings, plays, colours, and so forth. Think, for example, of the different emotions and feelings that are evoked by a painting by Hieronymus Bosch compared to one by William Turner, watching a play by William Shakespeare compared to one by August Strindberg, and the colours red, green, blue, yellow, and black. Advertising executives and marketing experts are fully aware of this latter capability, and use it all the time to develop advertising tactics and marketing strategies that are designed to elicit specific responses from customers, consumers, and clients.

Developing communication skills and abilities and expressing feelings and emotions are not the only advantages to be derived from participation in the arts and a first-class education in the arts. The potential exists to develop many other capabilities as well. While some art forms tend to be more individual in character – the visual and material arts for example – others tend to be more collaborative in character. Take drama, music, and opera for instance. It is impossible to put on a play, perform a symphony, or stage an opera without engaging in a great deal of cooperation and teamwork. This cooperation and teamwork ranges all the way from working together on the creation of sets and props and rehearsing scenes and movements to practising parts and putting on final performances. Through the preparation and production of works of art, people learn to work collectively in the realization of common causes, goals, and objectives, thereby developing collaborative skills and cooperative abilities that are in great demand throughout the world today. This also provides a great deal of social interaction and human cohesion, thereby counteracting the isolation that comes from contemporary technology and is such a major problem in the world today.

It is impossible to engage in the arts without learning to discipline oneself and use one's time, talents, and faculties effectively. This doesn't always mean discipline by an authoritarian teacher. More often than not, it means mastering tools, techniques, methods, instruments, materials, and the like for oneself. This helps to develop our physical and mental capabilities to a much greater extent, as well as realize more effective use of hands, legs, feet, arms, eyes, ears, minds, and bodies. Small wonder educators, social workers, psychologists, and health

careproviders are using the arts more and more frequently to help people deal with a whole host of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual problems.

What is true for people in general is equally true for people suffering from many different types of illnesses, diseases, and ailments. Recent research is revealing that people suffering from depression, anxiety, autism, Alzheimer's, or M.S., living out the final stages of their lives, or are in penal and mental institutions profit immensely for exposure to the arts and particularly participation in the arts. This is true for every art form, but especially for music. Listening to music, playing a musical instrument, singing in a choir, and so forth are powerful elixirs and great tonics for people in such circumstances because they activate chemical changes and physical reactions in the body and the brain that counteract negative images and stereotypes. And the more scientific research that is conducted in this area, the more the evidence accumulates that the arts produce mental and physical changes in the body and the mind that enhance people's quality of life and their ability to withstand some of the most difficult trials, tribulations, and challenges in life.

There is also the possibility of developing our critical faculties and sense of awareness, discrimination, and taste more effectively. This enhances our ability to make better judgements and assessments concerning a whole range of issues affecting our lives, our families, our communities, our social situations, and our environmental difficulties. This often morphs into a greater sense of awareness and appreciation for the skills, abilities, and accomplishments of others. It is impossible to participate in any artistic activity – be it a production, a performance, or an exhibition – without respecting the quest for excellence and perfection that lies at the heart of all artistic endeavours. This is invaluable, regardless of one's occupation, position, job, or station in life.

There is also much to be learned from the arts about life, living, and the world around us. Not only do the arts open up vast vistas and fertile avenues for exploration and discovery, but also they provide an unbelievable window on the world and everything contained in the world. Everything is there in one form or another: the universe, nature, the human species, other species, countries, cultures, history, geography, time, space, the past, the present, and the future, and virtually everything else.

Take what can be learned about the universe, nature, and other species for example. There is an incredible amount to be learned about this from Hildegard von Bingen's *Symphony of the Harmony of Heavenly Revelation*, Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, Antonio Vivaldi's *The Seasons*, Ludwig von Beethoven's *Pastoral*

*Symphony*, Franz Schubert's *Trout Quartet*, Camile Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, Allan Hovhannes' *Mysterious Mountain*, Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*, Claude Debussy's *La Mer (The Sea)*, Vincent d'Indy's *Symphony on a French Mountain Air*, and countless other works. It can also be achieved by studying the nature paintings of Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh, and a host of other painters, the poetry of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Walt Whitman, the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and John Muir, the photographs of Ansel Adams, and the works of wildlife artists such as John James Audubon, Owen Gromme, Robert Bateman, and Glen Loates. While much more might be said about this, suffice it to say that artists of all types have a great deal to teach us about the extraterrestrial and natural worlds in all their diverse aspects and manifestations.

The same holds true for life, living, human beings, and virtually everything related to human beings. There is an enormous amount to be learned about such matters from authors like William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Jean-Baptiste Molière, Miguel de Cervantes, Dante Alighieri, Charles Dickens, Omar Khayyám, Molana Jalal-eDin Rumi, Mark Twain, and numerous others. They teach us a great deal about things that are both extraordinary and commonplace, real and imagined, simple and complex, and encountered time and again in our lives regardless of where we live in the world or what we work at. Take Shakespeare for instance. His plays are full of insights into different personality types, diverse social, political, and societal situations, human triumphs and tragedies, and personal foibles and insecurities, which helps to explain why his plays are as revered today as they were the day they were first performed. His deep insights into life, living, the human condition and personal strengths and weaknesses in plays such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night* are phenomenal to say the least.

And this is not all. The arts also have a great deal to teach us about different countries, cultures, and civilizations. This is because artists and arts organizations create many of the signs, symbols, myths, legends, metaphors, rituals, and stories that are needed to shed light on these and other human collectivities as 'dynamic and organic wholes' or 'overall ways of life.' There is an enormous amount to be learned about France and French culture, for instance, from the works of Jean Baptiste Racine, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Cécile Chaminade, Victor Hugo, Alexander Dumas, Edgar Degas, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, just as there is a great deal to be learned about United States

and American culture from the works of William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Ken Burns, and Frank Lloyd Wright. These countries and cultures would not come alive for us the way they do if it was not for the aforementioned works and others dealing with the same matter.

This is equally true for history. Like the writing of history itself, the arts have a great deal to pass on about the past, as well as the historical development and evolution of every country, culture, and civilization in the world and the world as a whole. Every country, culture, and civilization in the world has a precious legacy of artistic works – paintings, plays, novels, sacred and secular texts, architectural edifices, musical masterpieces, craft objects, and the like – that say ‘*this is who we are.*’ These legacies provide a running commentary on how every country, culture, and civilization in the world came into existence, evolved historically, and what it cherishes most today. Since these legacies bring the histories of these human collectivities to life, they must be preserved, protected, and promoted as one of the most effective vehicles for understanding the past and seeing its relevance for the present and the future of all.

To this should be added what can be learned from the many different qualities that exist in the arts that enhance our knowledge, understanding, and mastery of other disciplines. From the visual arts, architecture, and the crafts, there is a great deal to be learned about colour, shape, mass, texture, form, proportion, and perspective; from dance, drama, and literature, there is much to be learned about balance, movement, muscle control, physical coordination, tragedy, comedy, satire, and pathos; and from music, there is much to be learned about sound, rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, and composition. These qualities can be used to great advantage in studying and mastering other disciplines – especially disciplines like physics, chemistry, geometry, mathematics, and so forth – which is why philosophers and scholars have long recognized the intimate connection between the arts, the sciences, mathematics, and other disciplines. Indeed, contemporary research is revealing that children’s ability to master complex subjects and concepts and difficult theories, ideas, and systems escalates rapidly when they are able to benefit from an education in the arts.

The arts also have a great deal to teach us about excellence, diversity, change, specialization, integration, and creativity – properties and characteristics that are of crucial importance in the modern world.

Take excellence for example. Regardless of what occupation or profession people decide to pursue, learning to pursue and achieve excellence is imperative



for every occupation and profession in the world. The arts value excellence more than any other discipline and activity in society. This is because excellence is imperative for the mastery of every art form and the performance of every artistic endeavour. No one likes to watch artistic performances that are mediocre or inferior in nature, since this leaves much to be desired. In order to prevent this, it is essential to aspire to and achieve excellence in every artistic discipline, which often turns out to be the key to mastering excellence in other disciplines and subjects as well. It is also the key to understanding what it meant by 'the art of science,' 'the art of politics,' 'the art of engineering,' 'the art of business,' and so forth, since these activities become art forms in their own right when they are conducted and practiced at the highest level of excellence. This can be achieved in any area, subject, or activity if we are wise enough to recognize it and learn from the arts what must be learned to realize excellence and perfection in everything we do.

This is equally true for diversity and change. The arts are incredibly diverse and are always changing, evolving, and mutating, thereby exposing us to new ways of thinking, doing, and altered forms of consciousness. While many techniques in the arts must be repeated over and over again to master them, one of the most important things about the arts is the fact that they are in a constant state of flux, not only in time but also in space. What is commonplace today may not be commonplace tomorrow, as the history of music, drama, the visual arts, opera, literature, and other art forms constantly reminds us. The arts are always on the move, so to speak, thereby helping people to deal effectively with diversity, change, and a world that is in perpetual motion.

The same is true for specialization. Depending on the problem at hand and specific needs and circumstances, the arts can be sufficiently focused to develop highly specialized skills and abilities. Through the material arts or crafts, for example, specialization can be developed in the use of hands and eyes, and therefore in the use of mechanical and technological tools and hand and eye coordination. Through music, specialization can be achieved in the utilization of the ear, and therefore improvements in aural acuity and awareness of acoustic ecology. And what is true for these art forms is also true for other art forms. Every art form can be sufficiently focused to provide refinement in any of our sensory, intellectual or physical faculties and capabilities.

The arts also to teach us a great deal about integration. By stretching across all human faculties, they can be used to great advantage to assist us in becoming

‘whole people’ and ‘total human beings’ in the best and most complete sense of these terms.

Since the arts engage the mind, body, heart, soul, intellect, spirit, and senses, they provide a way of bringing together all our human faculties to create a harmonious and organic whole. This makes us more balanced within ourselves, as well as more in tune with the world. This is why artists, arts institutions, and the arts have been in the vanguard of the movement to educate ‘the whole person’ ever since Matthew Arnold, the great nineteenth century British scholar and poet, espoused the need for the harmonious development of all the powers that comprise human nature. He was strongly opposed to the development of any one of these powers to the exclusion of others, and equally fully in favour of promoting excellence, perfection, and sharing the best humanity has to offer through the arts and education or ‘sweetness and light.’ Not bad advice for people living in a fragmented, disconnected, and disoriented world.

If the arts are the key to developing the whole person, they are also the key to developing the creative person. As such, they represent one of the best vehicles of all for helping people in general – and young people in particular – to respond imaginatively to the complexities and uncertainties of the modern world, not to mention the rapidly-changing nature of local, regional, national, and international events.

Many people feel that education should be directed towards preparing people for specific jobs, professions, disciplines, and activities. With the rapid rate of technological change and occupational turnover in recent years – it is now estimated that people will have fifteen to twenty different jobs during the course of their lives – this traditional view has started to change. It is now apparent that narrowly-trained and highly-specialized people are incapable of adjusting to the stresses, strains, and realities of the modern world, with totally different employment situations and jobs that are radically being transformed, restructured, or eliminated. In consequence, far more attention is being paid today to educating people who are creative – people who can respond creatively to whatever circumstances or conditions they are confronted with because they have learned to use their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual powers and capabilities in new, original, and highly inventive ways. It is creativity – not conformity – that enables people to perform effectively in jobs and occupations today, as well as fashion new forms of living and altered forms of behaviour and consciousness.

I had my own experience with this many years ago. While I did not lose my job or have it terminated, I decided I no longer wanted to work in the area I was

trained to work in at university. I was originally trained as an economist and taught economics for several years before making this decision. After a great deal of soul-searching and discussion, I finally decided that I wanted to work in the arts. But how? All my formal training had been in economics and I had no formal training, qualifications, or certification in the arts. So how would it be possible for me to make the transition from an area I no longer wanted to work in to an area I desperately wanted to work in? In short, how was it possible to turn my 'avocation' into a 'vocation' and 'occupation?' It is a question that many people are confronted with, but few take the time and trouble to wrestle with and resolve.

In my case, the answer came through a bit of creative ingenuity on my part. Why not design a study of 'the economics of the arts' and propose it to a number of arts organizations and institutions? This would enable me to draw on my knowledge of economics while simultaneously taking advantage of the experience I had gleaned through the education I received in the arts when I was young. While friends in the economics' profession told me there was no such thing as 'the economics of the arts,' I persisted and went ahead and designed the study anyway. It was a good thing I did, because it was picked up by the Ontario Arts Council which eventually hired me to undertake the study.

As luck would have it, this study morphed into a much larger study of theatre in Ontario – *The Ontario Theatre Study* – which was concerned with all aspects and manifestations of theatre in the province, from the economic and social to the psychological, educational, and political. I was asked to design this study as a result of my training in economics and the social sciences, and was then asked to become actively involved in its development and execution. This eventually led to my appointment as Assistant Director of the Ontario Arts Council and Director of the Council's Centre for Arts Research in Education. Within a few short years, I had made the successful transition from economics to the arts, which ultimately resulted in spending the rest of my life in the arts and cultural field. My life, my life's work, and the focus of all my energies and efforts were totally transformed, largely as a result of some creative thinking and ingenuity on my part.

I doubt very much whether this would have been possible if it not been for the education I received in the arts in my youth. This education helped me to develop my creative faculties to a much greater extent than would have been the case if I had not had this education. It also made it possible for me to pursue an entirely different career path – a path that has brought me an enormous amount of fulfillment and happiness in life because I am doing what I want to do and doing

it to the best of my ability, thereby confirming Confucius's wise advice to 'find a job you like and you will never work a day in your life.' This career path has been filled with many creative challenges, opportunities, jobs, and projects over the years. While some of these have been created by myself – such as the World Culture Project – others have been created in conjunction with other people and other institutions, most notably the development of two highly-innovative programs in arts administration at York University and the University of Toronto.

Without the education I received in the arts, I doubt very much if I would have been able to create these projects, jobs, and programs, or to confront the challenges and opportunities I have been presented with in life in imaginative and innovative ways. Much of this has come from my early exposure to the arts in general and artistic qualities such as creativity, excellence, beauty, and the quest for the sublime in particular. But the quality that has taught me the most about life and the world around me is holism. Not only did I learn very early that every work of art is a holistic entity composed of many interconnected and interrelated parts, but also I learned a great deal about holism that has been extremely valuable at each and every stage of the life process, primarily in terms of how to bring things together rather than split them apart.

As I reflect back on these experiences, I am in much better position to understand why a comprehensive education in the arts is so essential for every person. Not only does it enable us to reap enormous benefits and numerous rewards over the course of a lifetime, but also it provides the foundations that are imperative for a happy, healthy, productive, and fulfilling life. These foundations are both practical and theoretical in nature.

By enabling us to develop all our faculties and not just some faculties, the arts make it possible for us to become whole people and find balance, harmony, meaning, synergy, and symmetry in life. By making it possible to express our feelings and emotions in positive and constructive rather than negative and destructive ways – as well as to react imaginatively and creatively to complex problems and possibilities – the arts facilitate our adjustments to a world that is in perpetual motion and continuous flux. And by assisting us to learn an incredible amount about life, living, and the world around us – in both human and non-human terms – the arts broaden, deepen, enrich, and intensify our knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of many things that are of quintessential importance in life. In other words, the arts give us all the equipment we need to live complete, constructive, compassionate and caring lives, not only in the internal and personal sense, but also in the external and professional sense. They

also enable us to reduce the huge ecological footprint we are making on the natural environment because they are primarily labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive or material-intensive in nature, thereby reducing our consumption of scarce natural resources and providing excellent models for environmental sustainability and human happiness.

It is for reasons such as these that every child and young person in the world should receive a comprehensive education in the arts. This education should not be limited to a few art forms, but spread liberally across all art forms. It should also include opportunities to participate actively in the arts on both an informal and formal basis. Every child and young person in the world, be it in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America, the Caribbean, or the Middle East, should have enough opportunities to participate in the arts that the arts become the foundation for life. As Des McAnuff, Director of the Stratford Shakespearean Festival in Stratford, Canada, said recently:

To deny young people first-hand encounters with art of the highest order is to hobble their powers of imagination. And since those young people will be the citizens and leaders of tomorrow, the future vision and vigour of our society are ultimately at stake. Encouraging universal and affordable access to art should be a public priority. (Wake up young minds with the arts, *The Toronto Star*, Sunday, September 19, 2010, Opinion A 15).

It was convictions like this that caused delegates at the Second World Conference on Arts Education – which was convened by UNESCO in Seoul, Korea in 2010 – to articulate what is now called ‘*The Seoul Agenda*.’ This Agenda set out three fundamental goals for arts education, as well as a strategic action plan to implement them. These goals are:

- **Ensure that arts education is accessible as a fundamental and sustainable component of a high quality renewal of education;**
- **Apply arts education principles and practices to contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing the world today;**
- **Affirm arts education as the foundation for balanced creative, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and social development of children, youth, and life-long learning.**

This latter goal – which lies at the core of the Agenda – is what is required to create a strong and firm foundation for life. If every child and young person in the world was given a comprehensive education in the arts, they would have all the equipment they need to live rich, full, meaningful, and creative lives. The result would be much happier people and a far more harmonious world, with a

great deal more peace, order, stability, and civility in the world and far less violence, destruction, devastation, and war. This is what an arts education is all about in the final analysis. It is about making the world a better and safer place for all the diverse peoples and countries of the world.

*Стаття присвячена проблемі художньої освіти та її впливу на життя людини, приймаючи до уваги духовні та інші переваги означеного виду освіти. На прикладі своєї сім'ї автор розкриває значущість індивідуального підходу до виховання і розвитку особистості дитини. Автор звертає увагу на необхідність інтенсивної художньої освіти та її важливу роль для розвитку особистості людини.*

**Ключові слова:** *художня освіта, основи життя, розвиток особистості, творчість, артистична сприйнятливність, естетична сенситивність.*

*Данная статья посвящена проблеме художественного образования и его влияния на жизнь человека, принимая во внимание духовные и другие преимущества этого вида образования. На примере своей семьи автор раскрывает значимость индивидуального подхода к воспитанию и развитию личности ребенка. Обращается внимание на необходимость интенсивного художественного образования и его важную роль в развитии личности человека.*

**Ключевые слова:** *художественное образование, основы жизни, развитие личности, творчество, артистическая чувствительность, эстетическая сенситивность.*

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